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# FREMONT AND McCLELLAN,

THEIR

## Political and Military Careers

REVIEWED:

THEIR BIRTH, EDUCATION, AND EARLY ASSOCIATIONS—POLITICAL AFFINITIES—FREMONT'S ROCKY MOUNTAIN EXPLORATIONS—CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA—ALLEGED "INSUBORDINATION"—McCLELLAN AT WEST POINT—IN THE MEXICAN WAR—THEIR RELATIVE EXPERIENCE—McCLELLAN'S SECRET SERVICE IN CUBA—HIS PROMOTION BY JEFF. DAVIS—VISIT TO THE CRIMEA—HIS BOOK—FREMONT'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN—McCLELLAN'S PROCLAMATION—FREMONT'S PROCLAMATION—THE TWO POLICIES—McCLELLAN GENERAL-IN-CHIEF—FREMONT'S MISSOURI CAMPAIGN—McCLELLAN'S PLANS—HIS ADVANCE ON MANASSAS—PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN—YORKTOWN—WILLIAMSBURGH—SEVEN PINES—MRS. LEE—STEWART'S RAID AND THE BLOODY SEVEN DAYS—CROSS KEYS—CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON STRATEGY—"THE MAN FOR THE HOUR."

BY

VAN BUREN DENSLOW.

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SECOND EDITION.

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Honkers, N. H.:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE SEMI-WEEKLY CLARION.

1862.

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## PREFACE.

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THE following review was written as one of the series (No. 3) of "*Crisis Papers*," now publishing in the SEMI-WEEKLY CLARION. After its appearance in that form, some of its readers, believing that it deserved to be more widely disseminated, and desiring to publish it in its present form, have done so, with the consent of

THE AUTHOR.

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# A REVIEW OF THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY CAREERS OF FREMONT AND McCLELLAN.

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UPON the secondary actors in a drama, whether upon the mimic stage or upon the broad theatre of real life, public opinion is generally united. They pass on all sides for about what they are worth, as their lesser importance, by sparing them from criticism and partisanship, saves them from both friends and enemies. So in the reputations developed by this war ; there is little difference and no conflict as to the merits of Butler, Burnside, Anderson, McDowell, Pope, Curtis, Wallace, Sigel, and the hosts of other brave and capable military men who have distinguished themselves and shed lustre on their country's arms by their achievements in responsible yet subordinate capacities. Fremont and McClellan, however, enjoy no such undisputed honors. While a portion of the people of the country appear to regard Fremont as a military failure, and McClellan as possessing wonderful military abilities, others are enthusiastic in their admiration of Fremont's entire career as a soldier, and fail to see the evidences that McClellan is entitled to the favor which the Administration has shown him. When we add to this, that those who are satisfied with Fremont are generally those who voted for Lincoln, while the admirers of McClellan are those who voted for Breckinridge, Douglas and Bell, it is apparent that this war of reputations is, to a degree, partisan, and it is also probable that the instinctive elective affinities of the people have discerned in these men a fitness to be the leaders of their respective sentiments, and that therefore this affinity for Fremont or McClellan is based on deep-seated qualities in the men, which make them fit types of the two great political classes of the North. We propose to compare them, first politically, and secondly as soldiers.

Fremont was born and reared with all the advantages which the son of a poor widow enjoys in South Carolina. McClellan labored under all the early difficulties attending the child of a prosperous physician, in Philadelphia. Though poor—perhaps, because poor—Fremont educated

himself. Though rich, McClellan was educated by the nation. Whatever military abilities are possessed by Fremont have cost the country nothing; while it would be singular if McClellan were destitute of military knowledge, since he was educated at West Point and sent to Europe, at the national expense, to obtain it. Though born in the most aristocratic State of the slave South, Fremont early struck out for the free North, and his energy, prudence, associations, skill in business, and personal success and popularity are all Northern in their character. He has long stood, and stands to-day, the peculiar representative type of the party of Freedom, as opposed to the party of slavery-apologists in the North. Even his part in the Mexican war, which consisted in the conquest of California, did not in any way commit him as it did the more southern armies of Taylor and Scott, and their officers, to the business which constituted the main object of the war, viz.: extending human slavery, since slavery could not be extended to California.

McClellan, on the other hand, though cradled in the city of Brotherly Love, has never professed to be anything else than Southern in his political principles upon the points which have been gradually dividing more and more the North from the South, from the days of Calhoun to the bombardment of Sumter. It is doubtless unimportant that the Southern press claim that McClellan, while at West Point, conspicuously preferred the society of Southern cadets to that of the Northern "mudsills" in that institution. Being a Northern student himself, it is highly improbable, whatever his political views, that he would treat his own section of the country with a contempt so ostentatious as to have made it a memorable element in his character. True, his service as a lieutenant in command of sappers and miners, in the war upon Mexico—a war which was wholly Southern in its origin, intensely Southern in its aim, and mainly Southern in the officers conducting it—brought him again into association with such officers as Twiggs, Quitman, Worth, Lee, Beauregard, Pillow, Davis, Johnston, and Magruder, thus cementing warm personal friendships between him and them; but this was but the natural effect of his position. The fact that all these were his seniors in age, rank and consideration in the service, naturally tended to draw him towards them by that elective affinity by which ambitious minds are ever drawn to their superiors, and since he was deservedly well received by them, it was but natural that mutual influences should be exerted, tending to confidence upon their side, and to that regard for Southern men and Southern institutions upon his part which he has always consistently maintained, until it became necessary for him to choose between the preservation of such associations and a major-generalship in the service of his country. The claim of the Richmond papers, that he once, in correspondence with one who is now a distinguished rebel officer, expressed his sympathies



with the South with a force which could be fairly construed into a tender of his services to the Southern rebellion, should any attempt be made to coerce the South, is but a fair example of the ingratitude with which the rebels of the South regard their former friends. Did any such correspondence exist, the Punic faith which would reveal the fact would not scruple at publishing the letter. It is, however, a significant contrast that during the administration of Pierce, while the party of freedom were fixing their eyes upon Col. Fremont as their representative man and candidate for the highest office in the gift of the people, the party of slavery—then in power, with Jefferson Davis as Secretary of War, and Pierre Soule (now in Fort Warren) as Minister to Spain, and endeavoring to foment a war with Spain for the acquisition of Cuba to the (then) United States, and of course to the present "Confederate States"—caused Lieutenant McClellan to be appointed by Mr. Jefferson Davis upon secret service in and about Cuba, having reference to such expected war, in which, as in that with Mexico, Northern blood should again flow to build up the Southern slave power. Indeed, Capt. McClellan was openly stated by the press, at the time, to have been one of the minor officers who, with Beauregard, Duncan, Mansfield Lovell, G. W. Smith, and others now in the rebel army, were to command in Quitman's intended filibustering expedition against Cuba, which was broken up by Secretary Marcy. And, for his complicity with these movements for strengthening that slave power which is now the secession power, he was promoted from his brevet to a full captaincy by Jefferson Davis and sent to the Crimea. Fremont, however, has never been honored by the then secret and now open traitors to their country—nor, so far as we are aware, has he ever been used, under instructions or otherwise, to further the machinations of the cunning propagandists of human bondage and of its political power; though the Southern people, and especially those of Charleston, testified, by the presentation of swords, &c., their high appreciation of his services as a soldier in the Mexican war, and their pride in the fact that he was born in the South.

The first great attack upon the Sebastopol of slavery was made under the banner of Fremont. The battle-cry, "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Men, Fremont," rang throughout the continent, from the Alleghanies to the Cordilleras, from the snows to the tropics, with a thunder peal that announced to friends and enemies that the defeat of Fremont was freedom's last defeat. The North retired from the polls to their homes confident of the victory of four years after. Enough of them, however, had voted with the South to elect an Administration prepared to co-operate with the latter, who, stung and goaded by the certainty of coming defeat, went to Washington and spent the next four years, aided by the whole power and vigor of the Government, in preparations for the work of overthrowing it. It is singu-

larly illustrative of the fact that a happier star presided over the obscurer destiny of McClellan, that while Col. Fremont was defeated by fraud for the Presidency of the United States, Lieut. McClellan was successful in obtaining the Vice Presidency and Superintendency of a Western Railroad.

It is a part of his political history also, that upon the breaking out of the war, McClellan, on crossing the Ohio into Virginia, issued a proclamation, stating that should the slaves rebel (which they had not given the slightest evidence of intending) he, McClellan, would crush them "with an iron hand," while he instructed his troops in a general order to treat the white rebels kindly if they got them into their power, "because most of them were deluded." Here, then, was a platform growing out of McClellan's political sentiments, of kindness to the rebels, whom he was sent to punish, and of iron-handedness to the slaves, with crushing whom, if they should rebel against the rebels, he and his troops had as much to do as with driving home their stray cattle—no more. Nay, it is not now to be doubted, that any general insurrection among the slaves at that time, while it would have been far less sanguinary than the scenes which have since occurred in our efforts to preserve the Union, would have spread such consternation among the rebels, and would have so divided and crippled their resources, as to have speedily insured the triumph of the Union cause. Nor has the expectation, that a pro-slavery course would develop a Union sentiment at the South, been realized in a degree sufficient to afford us any assistance in quelling the rebellion. The most extensive insurrection, or the most thorough anti-slavery policy, could hardly have rendered the South more united than it has been. Fremont, on the other hand, believing that, as commander of his department, he had as much authority to free slaves as McClellan had to suppress their imaginary insurrections, and knowing that in this claim he had the precedent of the greatest of Roman generals in ancient times, and of such generals as Jackson, Taylor and Gaines, in our own country, declared—what Congress has since enacted—the slaves of rebels free. By the last-named events, these two generals are politically to stand or fall. In the mere matter of place-holding, Fremont has already fallen, and McClellan has been sustained. But office-holding is not even Fame; still less is it virtue or true greatness. The babbling of to-day's crowd may gratify greed, and be misnamed success, but true glory results only from sacrifices made in the cause of freedom and humanity, not from the silver bought by their betrayal.

Having reviewed the political considerations which influence the popular judgment of Fremont and McClellan, let us candidly examine their respective military careers. Fremont received his first commission as Second Lieutenant of Engineers in the year 1838. He immediately entered upon his daring and infinitely valuable explorations of the pathless regions of the Rocky Mountains, the Sierra Nevada, and the inter-

lying basin—contributing to the scientific world more valuable information than probably any living explorer, if we may except Humboldt, and entrancing the admirers of heroism and the lovers of romance in Europe and America with the dangers which he encountered, and the apparently insurmountable difficulties which he overcame. It was by this means, instead of idly place-hunting around Washington, that Fremont had passed successively through the grades of captain by brevet, captain, major, and lieutenant-colonel, which was his rank in 1846, when McClellan entered the army from West Point as second lieutenant of engineers. As showing the comparative degrees of military experience possessed by the present actors in this war, we may state that A. S. Johnston was then captain of dragoons, and Beauregard a lieutenant of engineers, so that Fremont then outranked all the present actors in this war, on either side, except Scott, Shields, Wool, and Twiggs. At the close of the Mexican war, McClellan was even nearer to Fremont in rank than in reputation. McClellan had won creditable mention as a lieutenant of engineers, in at least two official dispatches of the general to whose division he had been assigned, and had been promoted to a brevet captaincy, an average not brilliant good fortune. Fremont had, with 25 men, crossed the great mountains and deserts of America, amid untold hardships, yet with signal success, subsisting his horses on the bark of trees, and his men upon the flesh of horses—and had, with this force, recruited by a few Americans resident in California, while still unaware of the existence of war with Mexico, hoisted the Bear Flag of Californian independence, prevented the British fleet from seizing this province, driven out the Mexican forces, and, when he learned of the existence of our war with Mexico, exchanged the Bear Flag for the Stars and Stripes, thus giving to his country, as a province, California, the land whose rivers ran over glistening sands of gold. This success, and his scientific explorations of the Rocky Mountains, made him probably the most widely-known man of his age, not of royal birth, in the world. As a soldier, it was his good fortune to win to his country a province whose untold wealth repaid the cost incurred by Taylor and Scott in conquering territory to be afterwards surrendered. As a man of science, he had received the praises of Humboldt, and, as a popular hero, the applause of the people. McClellan, still unknown, might trace his aristocratic ancestry to the knights of Lochinvar, or search for their graves upon the bloody fields of Flodden, but the world instinctively bowed before the pedigree of Fremont as one of nature's royal family, whose reputation might be as storm-beaten, but would be found as pure and enduring as the snow-covered mountains among which his laurels had been gathered, and with which, by the mysterious coincidences of Destiny, his very name was associated.

Fremont's success in California attracted the envy of the red-tape West Pointists, to whose dullness his foresight was insubordination. Several

charges were made against him at the instigation of General Kearney, who had been sent to conquer California, but who unfortunately did not arrive until some time after Fremont had completed the work. The only charges, which were finally sustained, grew out of the fact that Fremont had obtained, on behalf of the United States, an agreement, subject to the ratification of his Government, for the purchase, for \$5,000, of an island commanding the harbor of San Francisco, which he foresaw the United States would need for military purposes, and which is, in fact, now occupied by a fort, the property of the United States. In this writing, he is styled Military Governor of California, in using which style his offense of insubordination consisted. His defense was, that he had received a commission from Commodore Stockton, as Military Governor, and that Stockton and Kearney, being unable to settle between themselves the question of precedence, he, being compelled to obey one or the other, using his best judgment, had obeyed Stockton. This course, he had every reason to believe at the time, was assented to by Kearney, who coöperated with him as Military Governor, in a friendly manner, until after the return of both to the States, when the charge of insubordination was unexpectedly made against him. President Polk offered him a pardon from the sentence of dismissal from the service passed by the court-martial, but Fremont, believing the finding and sentence utterly without foundation, refused the pardon and resigned. General Kearney, upon his death-bed, solicited and received the pardon of Fremont for the injury he had done him. The charge, nay, often the offense, of insubordination, being a frequent fact in the lives of the greatest military men, and occurring almost invariably when a far-seeing captain is called upon to sacrifice the interests of his command or of his country to the caprice or ignorance of an official superior, allies him with such names as Cæsar, Bonaparte, Wellington, Wolfe, Jackson, and Scott, rather than furnishes evidence of military incompetency. McClellan, also, resigned, owing, it is said, to the fact that his limited prospects in his profession as a soldier stood in the way of his marriage. Such were the relative positions of Fremont and McClellan at the bombardment of Sumter. McClellan, hitherto known as an officer of an influential corporation, upon whom, however, the nation had bestowed marked advantages of acquiring military knowledge, and who had, up to that hour, voted with the South, and whose last vote was cast for Breckinridge, the extreme Southern candidate, now a brigadier in the rebel army, in preference to both Lincoln and Douglas, two candidates from his own State of Illinois, would seem to have stood less chance of a prominent appointment. The supposed necessity, however, for uniting, by such means, all parties at the North, caused the first military appointments to be made almost exclusively from the anti-Republican parties. Patterson, whose house was mobbed in Philadelphia until he was compelled to raise the



stars and stripes, was made, to the surprise of all who knew him, a general, and to his apathy and indifference, caused by his pro-Southern sympathies, we are indebted for our defeat at Bull Run. Butler, who had seceded with the secessionists from the Charleston Convention, was commissioned by his political opponent, Governor Andrew ; and though he has as yet done nothing as a strictly military man, yet, as a semi-military administrative officer, the country has an evidence that such selections from the former vehement friends of the South may sometimes be as fortunate as the cases of Patterson, Stone, and others have proved disastrous. McClellan was commissioned, by Governor Dennison, of Ohio, a Major-General of Volunteers, and placed by the President in command of the Department of Ohio, comprising both banks of the Ohio River. Fremont was then in Europe, hastening his arrangements to return, in compliance with the invitation of his Government, and improving his time, means, and credit in purchases of arms and munitions of war, difficult to be obtained, and of which the nation stood in such need. Meanwhile, the press and public men of the country, of all parties, quietly assumed that his past services and experience eminently fitted him for a responsible command ; but no word of pressure, solicitation, or dictation was imposed upon the President's judgment as to what that command should be. The President and Senate alone were responsible for any rank or command which might be given or denied to Fremont. All that military propriety required at that time was, that his rank should be equal to his former rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Still it would have been a strange freak, alike impossible to the country and the President, to have overlooked the fact that his former rank and military experience were superior to those of any Unionists, except Scott, Shields and Wool, all of whom had passed the prime of their vigor, and that, if in addition the Administration should consult civil prominence as a guide and test of military talent, as in the absence of purely military men it was compelled largely to do, certainly none could stand higher than the modest, but pure-famed, ex-Senator from California, who had been the unanimous first choice of that North to which Mr. Lincoln was alone indebted for his Presidency, and who, had he contended, like Mr. Lincoln, against a divided instead of a united Democracy, would doubtless have preceded him in the presidential chair. Whatever data the President had, therefore, in his own position, as the head of the successful popular party, for estimating the popular confidence in his own civil abilities, applied equally to Fremont, without disparaging the effect of the exclusively military experience and reputation of the latter, advantages, for the crisis into which the country was then drifting, which the President had not enjoyed.

Meanwhile, McClellan entered upon his command in Western Virginia, opening it with a proclamation which, though it failed to reclaim the rebels, won golden opinions from all other pro-slavery men.

While the party who, through a Republican Governor and President, had given him his appointment, saw him transcend his province with surprise, perhaps with mortification, the President did not amend the proclamation, and the President's constituents acquiesced, supposing he intended to leave to his generals to deal with slavery according to their own judgments. McClellan was fortunate in the scene of his operations. Western Virginia had few slaves, and was therefore thoroughly loyal. But few rebel troops had been thrown into it, and those were commanded by inexperienced men, and vastly exceeded in numbers by McClellan's force. The rebels never in a single instance voluntarily gave battle to McClellan's subordinates; and, therefore, one report might have been made of them all, that—

“ When the fight became a chase,  
He won the fight who won the race.”

We say to McClellan's subordinates, as it is not generally known that *Gen. McClellan was not personally present, and that no forces under his immediate command actually took part in any of the battles in Western Virginia*, though the entire credit of being the commander of the department in which they were fought and the author of the official dispatches in which they were announced justly belongs to him alone, as the like credit relative to the department of the Mississippi and its battles belongs to Halleck. The first battle (Phillipi) was fought at that place (McClellan being 24 miles distant, at Grafton) by Brigadier-General Morris and Colonels Kelly and Dumont, our forces numbering over 3,000—the enemy stated at 1,940. At Rich Mountain, General McClellan, in command of 10,000 men, designed to attack the enemy in front. It is difficult to arrive at the exact numbers of the enemy, but we do not find them stated higher than about 5,000. He sent General Rosecranz around to the enemy's rear, with 3,000, who, coming only upon a force of some 300, routed them; the main rebel force, taking the alarm, quietly moved off during an interval of three hours, in which General McClellan stood waiting for official information from Rosecranz, so that McClellan was prevented by want of information from being actually engaged in this battle. The battle, or, rather, pursuit of Laurel Mountain and Cheat River, at which General Garnet was killed, was conducted by General Morris in person, assisted by Captain Benham (now General) and Colonel Dumont, without, it appears, the knowledge or orders of McClellan. At these engagements several thousand prisoners were taken by McClellan's subordinates, who, if detained by him, would have saved our Bull Run prisoners from the horrors of a long captivity. The prisoners which Morris, Benham, Lander, Rosecranz, Dumont, and Kelly (several of whom were McClellan's seniors in age and military experience) had captured, were all, in accordance with the policy announced in

McClellan's proclamation, of showing "mercy to the rebels when in our power, for many of them are misguided," released by General McClellan, without interference from the President, upon taking the "oath of allegiance," and returned to the rebel ranks in time to aid in our defeat at Bull Run. The estimation in which this policy, which soon became the humiliation of the Administration and the nation, was held by McClellan's officers and troops, is happily shown by the sarcasm of a captain in one of his Ohio regiments. The troops, in pursuing the rebels through the mountains, caught a rattlesnake, and, bringing it into camp, asked the captain what they should do with it. "Oh, swear it," he replied, "and let it go."

The natural accompaniment of ignorance upon any particular subject is implicit faith in those who pretend to understand it. At the breaking out of the rebellion, both the people and the President, who had been chosen from among them, professed and felt utter ignorance of the theory and practice of war. When delegations called upon the President to express their views relative to the novel questions that rapidly arose as the nation drifted into the vortex of war, his invariable answer was, "Gentlemen, I know nothing about military matters. I leave all these subjects to General Scott." We were astonished at the audacity of the youthful Southern pupils, who ventured a campaign against their old instructor, the hero of a hundred fights. Disappointment alone teaches us to "put not our trust in princes," and this disappointment came when the great soldier who had triumphed from Vera Cruz to Chapultepec was defeated at Bull Run. Though McDowell and his troops had fought far better than any general or troops in Western Virginia, the masses of the people, who judge according to success alone, and seldom regard the means used, looked away from the unsuccessful veteran Scott to the tyro in command of the Department in which the slender but only successes of the war had occurred. It was suddenly discovered that, as a junior member of a military commission of three United States officers sent by the Government to the Crimea, he had written a book which showed great military genius. It has never been our pleasure to meet with any person who has read this book, but all his admirers whom we have met are convinced that it proves its author to be capable of commanding the entire Union army. True, the works of Major Delafield and Major Mordecai, his co-commissioners, though received with equal favor, and regarded as possessing equal ability at the time of their publication, were not supposed to entitle either of those very estimable but unknown gentlemen to the same exalted rank. They doubtless would, however, had either of those gentlemen received from so profound a seer of undeveloped military genius, as our State Governors usually are, the appointment of Major-General of Volunteers. This appointment Captain McClellan had

obtained from Governor Dennison, of Ohio, and Majors Delafield and Mordecai had not—an appointment, however, which made him the only Major-General (though of three months' volunteers), except Scott, then in the service; Wool being only Major-General in the United States army by brevet. So that the gratitude of McClellan and the country is due in a greater degree to Governor Dennison of Ohio, than to all other sources combined for his military prominence in this war; and though these facts may seem to make McClellan's prominence the result of accidental good fortune in obtaining office rather than of any brilliant military achievements, still, when we consider how often great reputations are the offsprings of accident, though more frequently of those occurring in the field than in the cabinet, we are not surprised if men occasionally win rank as courtiers, which they had not won as soldiers. No one supposes that, had McClellan not resigned from the regular army, he would at this moment, without being under fire upon any battle-field, have risen to a higher rank than all his then senior officers. It is certainly a singular accidental working of our military system, that the very resignation from the army which lessened by some years his military experience, was necessary to his military promotion, and that his companions in arms, and seniors in rank, Sumner, Fremont, Heintzelman, Porter, Rosecranz, Shields, Wool, Harney, Anderson, and many others, should behold their Lieutenant of Sappers and Miners returning to them as Commander-in-chief, by the magical effect of the cabinet counsels of an Ohio Governor. Both the people and the President, who so faithfully represents them, however, felt the need of some one in whose every qualification they could repose absolute confidence, and upon whom, in their avowed want of acquaintance with military affairs, they could lean with religious faith and simple trust, and the desire that McClellan might be such an one was, with many, father to the faith that he was the most brilliant military man of the age. In the faith of the people and the President, therefore, as well as in his position, McClellan succeeded to Scott. The masses, on his promotion to the general command, were as enthusiastic in praise of the late Lieutenant of Engineers, whose good fortune it had never been to lead more than a company into the field, as they had before been in admiration of the gray-haired conqueror in a score of fights; nay, more, for the high praise never given to Scott of wearing as a name of honor, that of the terrible conqueror of Europe, was conferred by the people upon McClellan, who was hailed as a second Napoleon, while yet innocent of his maiden skirmish. It was not displeasing to the people, therefore, that the President transferred to McClellan the absolute supremacy over military matters, for which Scott deemed himself to be but imperfectly competent, owing to the many years he had already spent in the service of his country, a disqualification from which McClellan was peculiarly free. Scott, whose military jealousies are historical, was satisfied, as McClellan's previous



humble rank and services had not admitted of rivalry or difference between them. This would not have been the case had the choice fallen on Wool, whom, shortly before Bull Run, Scott stigmatized as an invalid, though his health has never interfered with the performance of any duties assigned to him, as did Scott's immediately after that battle; or on Shields, who, though next to Scott and Wool in experience, being a fighting General, was voted rash and no strategist, and with both of whom, as well as with most of the other prominent officers of the army, Scott had at some time quarreled. Fortunate, therefore, was the young general in entering upon his office, so obscure as not to have gained the envy of Scott, and so untried as not yet to have lost the good-natured confidence of the people, and consequently of the President. Fortunate was he also in the scene of his operations.

And here we take up again the comparison between him and Fremont, who was appointed at the same time to the command of the Western Department, his instructions a *carte blanche*, to do in all respects (we quote from recollection the language of the President) "what he deemed calculated to promote" not merely the success of the army placed under his command, but "the *interests of the people over whom he was set*." A viceroy could not have received a more unlimited authority. McClellan had the President, heads of Departments and Congress, at his elbow, before whom to lay his plans, whose suggestions he might receive and answer or adopt at pleasure. Fremont, removed from all these and obliged to select even his staff and his officers after the first military talent had been absorbed by the army of the Potomac, was compelled to act promptly upon facts, which, if attempted to be communicated by telegraph, would have been known to the whole country, and if by mail the delay would have been fatal. McClellan, having Scott on his right hand, and the President at his left, the Secretary of War in front and of the Treasury behind, was responsible only for success. His defeats could easily be laid upon others. Fremont stood alone, responsible for success or defeat alike, except in the few instances in which his plans were frustrated at Washington. McClellan's enemy was concentrated at a single point—Manassas. Fremont's foes were spread over thousands of miles of the States of Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee. Fremont, on reaching St. Louis, found himself in command of about 22,000 troops, the terms of service of most of which had already expired, who had received little or no pay or attention from the Government, which had been wholly occupied with the grand army at Washington, and who were necessarily scattered, by the exigencies of the service, over Missouri, Kansas, Illinois and Kentucky in independent bands, the adequacy of which, as a protection from the enemy, may be inferred from the fact that St. Louis, though threatened by an army under Price, reported at 30,000 men, had but four regiments for its defense, while Cairo, similarly threatened by Johnson,

Buckner and Pillow, had a like inadequate force. Washington, though defended by a force exceeding that of the enemy, was surrounded by over thirty forts. Fremont caused three to be built for the defense of St. Louis. The amount of property at stake at St. Louis was many times that at Washington. Yet Fremont has been accused of unmilitary conduct in fortifying St. Louis. Fremont, knowing that every available regiment was required for fighting or drilling, had the digging done by contract, at a cost of \$130,000, an entire cost which would not pay the expense of defending Washington from breakfast until dinner. Yet he has been accused of lavish expenditure in this item. The data are not in possession of the public for a calculation of the comparative expensiveness of the Western and Eastern Departments at this period. We only know that, though Fremont was furnished with very little money, and at times with none, yet the total of claims against the Government, on account of and at the close of his three months' control of the Western Department, fell short of \$10,000,000, a sum which would have paid the general war expenses of the Government, nearly all of which were incurred in McClellan's department, for about four days. From West and East alike the flower of the national forces had hurried to Washington for the defense of the capital, and in expectation that the rebellion would receive its first and most vital assaults in Virginia, after driving the rebels from which McClellan would proceed to crush the rebellion in the South and South-west. Little did the nation then dream that the few straggling regiments left to protect the West from invasion, and put down the Missouri guerrillas, would form the basis of the army, which, without the aid of a single Eastern regiment, would invade the Southern States, open the Mississippi, with the aid of Farragut's fleet, and strike the most ponderous blows at the rebellion. McClellan was in command of the grand army of the Union, in whose success we were interested and determined to believe. Fremont was in command of a distant and neglected department, where, though the difficulties of the commander's position were increased, it was thought he might be criticised or sacrificed without impairing the general faith in the Union arms, whose triumph was expected to be secured, not by the feeble army of the West, but by the grand army of the Potomac.

Fremont immediately set about organizing a gunboat fleet, and was accused of visionary views of naval expeditions on the Mississippi and its tributaries. McClellan and the Navy Department at Washington were opposed to such chimeras. In vain the brave Ellet, who has since found a victorious grave, at his capture of Memphis, hurled his eloquent philippics at McClellan and the Navy Department for their opposition to ram fleets. Not until the "irregular opposition" of the Merrimac to our wooden fleet at Fortress Monroe had sunk millions of property and sent in a moment hundreds of our brave sailors to a needless grave, did the lethargy of McClellan and Welles give place to the strategy of Stanton, Foote, Davis and Ellett. McClellan

boldly telegraphed to the commandant of a New London fort to get his ancient smooth-bore guns in order, to stop, with a distant volley of round shot, the passage into New York of a vessel from whose sides the heaviest solid shot from the Monitor, fired at a distance of fifty feet, fell harmless; while Ellet, still unable to obtain a commission in the navy as captain, finally received from the innovating Stanton, spite of the adverse influence of the General whom he had criticised, a commission as *Colonel of the ram fleet* which captured Memphis and opened the Mississippi. McClellan, after one of the most disastrous military movements in history, is preserved from utter annihilation by the very iron-clads which he opposed and despised, while the gunboat system, initiated under Fremont, has taught the world a new lesson in inland warfare, and has given to us the most brilliant successes which have yet crowned our arms in this contest.

The Government was unable to provide Fremont with money or men. The enemy were near. Their spies were all around him. In the midst of actual weakness and poverty, there was but one safe course for him to pursue, viz.: to make the utmost display of wealth and strength consistent with real economy. The few regiments around St. Louis were magnified by every artifice to many times their real number. A relative of Fremont being the proprietor of one of the most elegant houses in St. Louis, the General gave the Government the benefit of its respectability without making it responsible for the rent, a pitiful item of twelve hundred dollars per annum, but which has been harped upon as a leading item in Fremont's extravagance. Fremont's carriage, which was in constant use as a hospital carriage for his sick soldiers, was drawn also by four horses, for the very democratic reason that two could not draw it through the boot-jack mud of Missouri. Alas, that the very mud, which was McClellan's standing excuse for not moving at all, could not justify Fremont in employing an extra team. This was characterized as too aristocratic for a republican general, though McClellan, with foreign princes upon his staff, and it was said fifty horses in his stall, might employ a special train and a specially decorated car with which to receive Mrs. McClellan, and convey her from Baltimore to Washington, as an emperor would receive and convey his consort. Yet none saw aught in it but the dignity due to his office.

Fremont had long been habituated to prominence and command. His face was as familiar in the squalid Indian's filthy hut as in the *salons* of the European *noblesse*; and, for the accomplishment of his assigned task, he could, with equal indifference, take part at a diplomatic dinner or dine upon roots and the flesh of unclean beasts, surrounded by hardy frontiersmen, whom sheer hunger had driven to insanity, and who, in the extremity of their sufferings, plunged into the freezing mountain torrent in the crazed hallucination that they were bathing in tropical streams. That such a man, intensely matter-of-fact and practical as he was, should be

charged with descending to the assumption of barbaric display of equipages, &c., which only an ignorant oriental nabob would covet, furnishes another illustration of the fact that the defamer, in his stupidity, always invents those fictions which it would seem least possible that the world could believe, but which partisan enemies adopt with the fiery faith of Tertullian—*Credo quia impossibile*—and believe them because they are marvellous.

A few days after Fremont took command of the Western Department, and before it was possible for him to change the condition of Lyon's command, the latter fought the battle of Springfield, under circumstances for which the prior commander of the department might perhaps have been responsible, but for which Fremont could not have been. That prior commander was George B. McClellan. We prefer, however, to accept the judgment of the very best witness in the case, the heroic Lyon himself, who, in his letter written on the eve of the battle, very boldly and bluntly charged the responsibility of being "determined to cripple him, if he could," upon one whom he chose irreverently to designate as "old Scott."

There was one occasion upon which the nation may wish, for Fremont's sake, he had acted differently. McClellan sat in his office at Washington in command of 70,000 men, a surfeit of troops such as no general on this continent had ever led into an engagement. There was no attack to be made or met, but with the absoluteness of a newly-enthroned boy, he telegraphs to Fremont to send him five of his best regiments immediately. The dispatch finds Fremont about to send those very troops to the relief of the imperiled Mulligan. True, Sturgis and others have been ordered to his relief, but he would make assurance doubly sure. Fremont protests. The Administration reiterates the order, more and more peremptorily. FREMONT OUGHT TO HAVE DISOBEYED THE ORDER; but he obeyed, sending the troops eastward, leaving but three thousand to defend St. Louis, and Mulligan was sacrificed. Yet this is the man who is charged with being naturally insubordinate. It may be in the power of McClellan to explain as satisfactorily the blunder of Ball's Bluff, the slaughter of Leesburg, and the sacrifice of the noble Baker, and especially his failure to obey the order of the President to advance on the 22d of February. If such an explanation exists, it has not yet gone into history. One point is proven. The strategy which compelled the surrender of Mulligan originated at Washington, and not at St. Louis.

It would be in vain for us to attempt to do justice to Fremont's hundred days in Missouri. He found the State secession. He left it Union. He found the rebel forces threatening St. Louis. He was removed from the command at the moment when, by a series of rapid marches, previously declared, by the Westpointists, physically impossible, and brilliant military combinations unequalled in this war, he had driven the



rebel armies to the borders of Arkansas, and was there upon the eve of a battle which would doubtless (for Fremont has never yet been defeated, except by politicians) have thoroughly broken up the rebel campaign west of the Mississippi. Under Fremont, the rebels were driven one hundred miles further than his subordinate, Hunter, thought it safe even to follow them. This was a singular reason for superseding Fremont by Hunter. Under Hunter the Union troops retreated, but under Halleck they again advanced over the same routes and in the same manner as under Fremont; and many months after, and under less favorable circumstances, but still triumphantly, Fremont's chosen general, Sigel, fought out Fremont's intended battle at Pea Ridge, thus vindicating his policy and his strategy. It is known, moreover, that Fremont on the 8th September sent to Washington by a special messenger, lest, if sent by mail or telegraphed, it might become known to the country and ultimately to the rebels, the entire plan of that now famous campaign by our army and gunboats by the way of the Mississippi, Tennessee, Cumberland and White Rivers, which his ultimate successor, Halleck, adopted, and which Halleck's subordinates carried out in its details. But while Fremont, as a soldier, was putting forth his unrivalled energy in Missouri, various influences were conspiring against him at Washington. Though of the regular United States army, and having filled more and higher grades therein than his rival on the Potomac, he had dared not only to be a soldier, but a thorough soldier, without asking leave of the West Point Academy for boys. His profession had been identical, and his experience similar, though superior, as an introduction to military life, to that of Washington, but there is hardly any probability that Washington would be considered adequate to any responsible command at the present day, without first mingling with the boys at West Point. Would it do for a soldier educated at West Point to approve of the plan or policy of a soldier educated at all points? Would it not at least show that the advantages he had enjoyed had failed in his case to confer superiority? But Fremont's chief offense consisted in having spoken, "FREEDOM TO THE SLAVES OF REBELS!"

This would have been well enough, if he, according to the first rule of modern statesmanship, which consists in following, not in guiding the people, had waited until the masses demanded it of him. Six months later, Congress and the President, in the Confiscation Bill, adopted his policy; and the world of to-day is enthusiastic in praise of that statesmanship which shuts its eyes to everything not yet pointed out by the slow-moving finger of the twenty millions. It will thus be seen that true wisdom is not in the astronomer applying his telescope to the heavens, and peering into worlds unseen by those below, but in the weather-cock on the top of his observatory, to which the crowd look to discover which way the wind blows. Again, although Fremont's vigorous anti-rebel policy was regarded by the loyal North

with universal approbation, the loyal North were not in rebellion against the Government, and were not likely to be, and therefore did not need to be conciliated. The border States were, and since the North would furnish men and money, no matter what the policy of the Government, and the border states would only furnish their pittance of either if the policy of the Government were pro-slavery, what more statesman-like than to let the border States rule the loyal North on this question. Fremont was removed from command in Missouri, at a time when McClellan's influence was supreme in military affairs, in relation to which the President frequently and publicly expressed his entire ignorance. We make a deduction; McClellan is mainly responsible for the removal of Fremont from command of the Western Department. The petition from semi-rebellious Kentucky would have been powerless without the concurrent influence of the General-in-Chief.

Until the advent of E. M. Stanton, McClellan had the actual control, or, rather, prevention of all war movements, and not a single military success of value had been won by the Federal army. For reorganizing the army, after the defeat at Bull Run, great credit has been given him. It is poetical, perhaps, to say that he waved a "magic wand," but he did not, nor did he "create an army out of nothing." The task did not even require the highest order of military gifts, and could be performed by the mere drillmaster and martinet. It consisted in giving the arms, with which Government had supplied him, to the soldiers whom the Government had enlisted for him, and teaching the latter how to handle the former, as the Government had taught him at West Point. The task could not be made a long one, and his army were in as good condition in October as they were in March. Nay, some of the regiments and brigades deteriorated sadly during the interval of inaction, at the close of which one of his brigades was characterized by an experienced soldier from Western Virginia, who was assigned to its command, as resembling pirates rather than soldiers. His reviews, frequent at first, were desisted from after a few months. Reconnoissances were rare, mock battles almost unknown, and the hope of real ones degenerated often into the peaceful desire that the objects of the war might be accomplished without them, until finally week after week rolled around, in which McClellan did not even ride from his office in Washington across the Potomac to visit the camps, and when he did he was greeted with enthusiasm, not so much because he was so great a general, as because he was so great a stranger. With 200,000 men, he had for months permitted the rebels, with a force which no evidence shows ever to have been larger than from 70,000 to 100,000, to blockade the Potomac and besiege the capital. Under pretense that he was about to make a movement, he prevented his troops from erecting winter quarters, but compelled them to hibernate in canvas tents, while the rebels lived in comfortable log-houses. His influence, like a palsy, restrained movements

everywhere. Halleck, Buell, and Mitchell, with 200,000 men, were prevented from attacking Bowling Green, which the subsequent official report of Beauregard, and the private letter of A. S. Johnston to Jefferson Davis, written on the eve of the battle of Shiloh, show to have been defended by only from 7,000 to 15,000 rebels, and Columbus, which was doubtless defended by the same force which Pope met at New Madrid and Island No. 10. McClellan did not prevent the Merrimac from being completed, but he most gallantly prevented a Northern lady from singing popular Northern songs to the soldiers. For this distinguished and meritorious success, some conservative individuals, we believe, presented him with a sword.

With the advent of Stanton, however, came vigor. Success depends not so much upon knowledge as upon those qualities which command knowledge, and without which all knowledge is unavailing, viz.: character, energy, and will. These Stanton infused into the whole army, by the general order of the President to "go forward" on or before the 22d of February, which was secretly communicated to all the commanders. Then in brilliant succession followed, like meteors gleaming out upon the darkness, victory upon victory, in the departments which McClellan did not control. Rapidly as the running lightning could communicate the cheering intelligence to the country, came Mill Spring, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Bowling Green, Columbus, New Madrid, Island No. 10, Nashville, Murfreesboro', Huntsville, Newbern, Fort Macon, Fort Pulaski, Forts Jackson and St. Philip, New Orleans, Pea Ridge, and Pittsburgh Landing. Lo! the centre of the rebellion was broken; the war almost decided in our favor by the generals in other departments. McClellan, meanwhile, was proving himself a second Napoleon only in the number of men under his command, which now stood at the enormous figure of 230,000. His force exceeded all the forces combined which had won the thirty Union victories in other departments, had been longer in the service, was more thoroughly equipped, yet, with the exception of the slaughter of Ball's Bluff and the unintentional but successful skirmish at Drainsville, he had made no strategic movements except upon the Treasury. Not even had he by armed reconnoissances ascertained the enemy's true force, or whether his guns were of brass or wood. Naturally, where all was ignorance, all was exaggeration. We state, without fear of contradiction, that never before in history had a force one-fifth as large been under the command of a general who never had led a regiment into battle. Though the enemy opposed to him numbered but a third of his own huge and unwieldy command; though an armed reconnoissance would have shown at any time that the enemy's apparently most powerful batteries were of wooden guns; though the ablest rebel generals—A. S. Johnston and Beauregard—had left the indolence of opposing McClellan at Manassas

to such calibre as ex-Street Commissioner G. W. Smith, while they found more fitting scope for their abilities in endeavoring to stay the headlong progress of Grant, McClelland, Wallace, Sigel, Pope, and Mitchell at the West; though, finally, the President's order for an advance was peremptory, the day passed, and the order stood disobeyed. McClellan was not ready, and opposed any advance prior to the 15th of April, by which time the heats of summer would have set in, and a further postponement till fall would have been inevitable, accompanied by a still further decline in Government credit, and a recognition of the independence of the Southern Confederacy in Europe. Upon the question of this disastrous policy, a council of his twelve division generals was called. Eight of the twelve (seven of whom had been appointed at McClellan's request) voted for McClellan's inaction. Four, the most experienced officers in the service, all of whom were McClellan's seniors in age, service, and experience, voted for an advance. The President, then, overruling McClellan's counsel, ordered the army divided into four *corps d'armee*, each under command of one of the four belligerent generals, the whole to remain under the command of the pacific McClellan, to whom remained the alternative of advancing against his judgment or resigning. McClellan advanced under protest, on the 10th of March, upon the smoking ruins of the winter quarters, in which a rebel force, one-third to one-sixth his own in number, had quietly spent the winter upon a plain destitute of natural strength, heavy entrenchments, or artillery. Never did the 'American arms, except in the surrender of Hull to the British, or of Twiggs to the rebels, suffer so great a humiliation, as when the advance on Manassas showed what 60,000 rebels had during a long winter achieved against 230,000 Federal troops. It is difficult in the light of the facts which the advance revealed to conjecture upon what possible views McClellan could have feared a defeat. Interested or biased contemporaries may urge want of time for preparation, but the plea contains its own refutation, for time passed at the same rate over McClellan as over the rebel generals, his assistance and resources at all times quadrupled theirs, and there was no reason why he should not have been more ready than they. Impartial history will regard the second advance upon Manassas as so inglorious in its long delay as to be only less humiliating to the Federal arms than the first.

The President felt the humiliation of this left-handed and barren success, and, in honest vindication of his own course, published his order for a general advance, made two months earlier, and also two further orders, one limiting McClellan openly, as he had for a brief period before been practically, to the army of the Potomac, and one restoring Fremont to command, placing Halleck, Fremont, and McClellan, upon a level as commanders of the three departments.



The order and sequence of these events are significant, as showing, first, that the utmost efforts of the pro-slavery, West Point, and red-tape enemies of Fremont had been unable to make good their hue-and-cry, by any proofs tending to tarnish his fair fame for incorruptibility, energy, and military capacity; secondly, that the moment McClellan ceased to advise and commenced to act, the cloud passed away from before the star of Fremont, and finally that McClellan, though still untested as to his capacity to command upon the field, was proven to be no longer the fit person to control the military counsels of the Government.

Again the Government ordered McClellan forward, this time to Richmond. Then was one of McClellan's golden opportunities. By the evacuation of Manassas, he had become acquainted with the exact force of the rebels. They, accustomed to and expecting a continuation of McClellan's masterly inactivity, would have been taken as much by surprise by a sudden display of energy in him, as by a strategical movement by another. Had he then, in compliance with the policy of Stanton, marched upon Richmond, by the direction of Manassas and the healthy valley of the Shenandoah, keeping his whole army united, and covering always his base of operations, is it within the range of possibility, that that army of 230,000 marching to Richmond in a week could have been beaten by the 60,000 rebel troops, who withdrew from Manassas? The terms of service of the rebel troops were rapidly expiring, they were discouraged by their constant Western defeats, and their conscriptions had not yet filled up their ranks. Even under these circumstances, McClellan reluctantly and against his own judgment, but according to his own plan, advanced. We do not believe that history justifies any government in entrusting to a commander the execution of projects which he disapproves. If his army prevails, his judgment is overthrown. If his judgment is vindicated, his army is overthrown. The issue will leave him in the inevitable dilemma of being either unsuccessful or injudicious. After two weeks of vacillation had enabled the rebels to perfect their retreat to Richmond, McClellan's novel and startling plan was announced, being the abandonment of the direct route, *via* Manassas, which he had been content to pursue as long as it was obstructed by the enemy, for a march upon Richmond *via* Yorktown. This policy the President and Secretary of War disapproved, upon views now proved to have been wise, notwithstanding the sanguine assurance of McClellan, that, taking this route, he needed but 120,000 men to capture Richmond—thus proposing to leave in the extended department of the Potomac and the Shenandoah, and for Western Virginia, in all, 110,000 men, including McDowell's corps. The President at last deferred, upon the maxim that "the general who is to fight a battle has the right to plan it." It is claimed, however, by some of McClellan's adherents, that by his plan, McDowell's corps should have been sent to him in addition,

instead of remaining to protect Washington, and advance by way of Fredericksburg. If this were his original plan, which it was not, the raid of Stonewall Jackson to Harper's Ferry, with 30,000 men, at a time when Washington was defended by a much smaller number, shows that, had the defending force been further depleted, according to McClellan's wish, by the withdrawal of the remainder of McDowell's corps—part of whom were actually sent to him—the rebels could have captured Washington without difficulty.

161,000 men in all were sent to McClellan on the Peninsula for the capture of Richmond, of whom over 120,000 accompanied him, and the remainder followed as re-enforcements. When he landed at Fortress Monroe, the enemy at Yorktown numbered 7,000 men, with a reserve of 50,000, at most, at Richmond.

Time and space do not permit us to trace the various phases of the campaign on the Peninsula—the cabinet council in which the plan was unanimously condemned, but spite of which the will of the self-confident young general prevailed—the transportation of his original force of 123,000 men to Fortress Monroe, at an expense of \$50,000,000, and at the risk of destruction by the then all-powerful Merrimac, to the unforeseen poltroonery of whose new officers he was indebted for the safety of the grand army—the oppressive and ostentatious secrecy by which his movements were veiled from the North, while the entire South, by his weeks of delay at Fortress Monroe before advancing on Yorktown, was made fully aware of his plans and numbers ere he had prepared for action—his refusal to capture Yorktown while it yet contained but 7,000 troops, though such policy was urged by officers who had grown gray in the service before he had entered it. Arrived at Yorktown, he found entrenchments, stopped and telegraphed to the President a glowing account of their tremendous strength. It is exceedingly embarrassing to a brave commander to have a timid judgment. His heart may pant with the desire, and his eagle eye may flash at the prospect, of driving the enemy to the wall; yet, if his genius supplies him only with a keen appreciation of the obstacles in his way, and with a contemptible estimate of his means of overcoming them, while his heart may be brave as a lion's, his history will be meek as a lamb's. Better the ignorance of such men as Farragut and Porter, which supposes that wooden vessels can smash through iron-clads and stone forts, than the discernment which sees no strength except in the enemy. The Secretary of War replied to McClellan's dispatch by ordering him to move on to the enemy's works immediately, and take them; but, instead of obeying, he began throwing up defensive entrenchments to protect the 120,000 men under him from the garrison before him. Had he marched to fight the enemy, Napoleon-like, as soon as he could have got at them, and stormed every intrenchment as soon as he came to

it, success, considering the disparity of numbers, would have been inevitable, the loss of life, treasure, and time would have been infinitely reduced: the rebel re-enforcements, if such there were, for Richmond could not have arrived, and Richmond would speedily have been taken, which, with the Western campaign, would have crushed the Rebellion, and restored peace to our unhappy country.

Instead of this, there follows the month of siege with no attempt to prevent the re-enforcement of the enemy, or to intercept his retreat, terminating in an evacuation, against which, as a failure, the country had been guaranteed, but which, having occurred, was trumpeted as a victory—then the battle of West Point, at which, as at the battles of Western Virginia, McClellan was not present, and of Williamsburgh, fought also while McClellan was still at Yorktown, the popular prints of which, however, represent the second Napoleon mounted on a fiery black charger at the head of his troops, within a few yards of the bayonets of the enemy—McClellan's remarkable dispatches, in which he for some mysterious reason gives the credit of this battle to Hancock, though, spite of the suppression of the official reports, the whole country knows that it was fought by Hooker—and his astoundingly pusillanimous official dispatch, "My entire force is considerably inferior to that of the rebels, who will fight well, but I will do all I can with the force at my disposal," when all that he could have known was, that the portion of his forces actually engaged, which was not a fifth of his entire force, was outnumbered, and when the whole country knew that his force was twice that of the enemy. In relation to this battle, Hooker says: "History will not be believed when it tells that the devoted officers and men of my division were permitted to carry on their unequal struggle, from morning until night, unaided, in the presence of more than 30,000 of their comrades, with arms in their hands; nevertheless it is true." And the country asks why was it true, not only here, but all through the Peninsular battles, that some single division fought against overwhelming numbers, while the capacity of the commander failed to bring the great body of the army into action, thus showing that the army, whatever was its ratio to the enemy, was too large for its general? Nor can we dwell upon the leisurely retreat of the rebels to Richmond, their leaders being at once too humane and too shrewd to develop their strategy in the swamps of the Chickahominy. Still less heart have we for contemplating the ghastly spectacle of 35,000 men prostrated by the fevers of the swamps and trenches, without being permitted to strike a blow for their country, and led, not against rebels in arms, but against malaria, against typhoid, against the invisible darts of Death himself. We grow sick at heart when we think that while the dying saviors of our country were lifted at the rate of a regiment a day delirious from the trenches, their pitying comrades were compelled to guard the deserted and empty dwellings of rebels from being used as hospitals for the reno-

vation and cure of their raving brothers in arms, to stand sentinel over the springs of rebel water, and the shade of rebel trees, lest a Union soldier might receive with weeping gratitude their cool refreshment; thus compelling the sick and dying youth, to whom at their homes fond mothers and sisters would have brought the cool waters of the mountain springs of Maine or of Minnesota, to drink in death from the black and muddy waves of the sluggish Pamunkey. And yet, while amidst the malarious seclusion of the peninsular jungles all this vast untold tragedy of ten thousand scenes was being enacted, every one of which would have melted in one common river of tears the homes and hamlets of the North, and none of which were the effects of battle, or legitimate consequences of war, the free and easy, hail-fellow-well-met, and therefore popular young general, who had never fought a battle nor won a victory, lays down his cigar, takes up his pen and writes, for the country to read, that "all things are progressing satisfactorily, in accordance with his plans and wishes;" and the weeping and stricken country, with an effort to peer dimly through the darkness and see in all this disaster that mysterious phantom "strategy," takes back for burial the emaciated forms of the sons whom, hale and stout, she had laid upon her altar, and looks, still through her tears, with a marvelous constancy to the general she has idolized for the full fruition of her faith. That army, which McClellan had telegraphed was greatly outnumbered by that of the enemy, he extended before Richmond in the face of that enemy, until it was twenty miles from wing to wing, and exceedingly difficult for one portion of it to re-enforce another, when, as if still further to weaken it, he threw a small portion of his army across to the right bank of the Chickahominy (*a la* Ball's Bluff). History will record with tears that Casey's division of raw and newly-levied troops, which had hardly yet been taught more than how to camp and how to march—thus indiscreetly isolated, against the written protest of General Keyes, and placed within the enemy's power by the commander-in-chief—after a brilliant fight, in which 4,600 men kept back 40,000 for twenty-four hours, was at last annihilated, not so much by the overwhelming numbers of the enemy, as by the merciless aspersions of the *absent* commander-in-chief, which were retracted by him too late to repair the injury done to an aged and gallant general, a brave division and a suffering country.

The generals engaged deemed it of the utmost importance to press up the ultimate rout of the rebel forces at Seven Pines by an immediate march on Richmond. McClellan overruled this policy. It subsequently appeared that the rebel army fled to Richmond in a panic equaling our own at Bull Run, and that, had the policy of his subordinates been pursued, McClellan's army would have marched into Richmond almost without resistance. McClellan was now anchored in the midst of the Chickahominy swamps. From this position he telegraphed to Washington that



his forces were ample, and that he would be in Richmond within two days, though the two days passed in the usual quiet. His front was seven miles from Richmond; his rear a considerable distance forward from White House Landing—his base of operations. Here immense quantities of military stores were being collected, as rapidly as the means of transportation would permit, and were piled up over acres of area without a sentinel, much less a protecting force, though fifteen Union soldiers stood guard over the residence and grounds of McClellan's former friend, General Lee, in the vicinity. Lest the rebels might in some way fail to get information of this state of facts, the gallant young general causes Mrs. Lee—who was fully acquainted with them—to be passed from the vicinity of the White House through our lines to Richmond, with a pomp and ceremony such as might have honored the queen of an allied country, rather than the distrust which might have protected our country against the lynx eyes of a female rebel and spy. *On the day following*, General Lee sent a cavalry force under Stewart, which passed around McClellan's right flank and across his rear, going over the very road over which Mrs. Lee had been taken, slaughtered our unarmed sick soldiers upon the train at Tunstall's Station, sabreing such wounded soldiers as they came across, destroyed the track and bridges of the railroad which formed McClellan's means of communication with his base of operations, collected the information which led to the great seven days' conflict, and returned unharmed around McClellan's left wing to Richmond, thus making the entire circuit of our forces, and accomplishing a reconnoissance, one of the most singular in history, as the opportunity presented to it by McClellan was one of the most rare and remarkable. What an exceedingly ungentle return was this on the part of Mrs. Lee for the gallantry with which our confiding general had not only enabled her to become possessed of the information which caused this raid, but to communicate it to the enemy. Had our General himself, in confidential correspondence with General Lee, disclosed important weaknesses in his own position, it would hardly have been more ungenerous for the rebels to have made use of the disclosure. Such treachery was certainly not to have been expected from high-toned and chivalrous rebels.

It would seem probable that this raid might have suggested to McClellan that his base of operations, White House Landing, was too distant, and that a nearer, safer, and healthier one could be found on the James River. The enemy were not yet prepared to attack him while making the change, as a large corps of their force was with Jackson in the Valley of the Shenandoah. That no such idea of changing his base of operations was suggested, however, is shown by the fact that, instead of sending a reconnoissance to the James River, he sent his engineers to relay the track of the Richmond and York River Railroad, and rebuild its bridges, and ordered up from Fortress Monroe still further stores, siege guns, shot and

shell, not by way of the James, but *via* the York River, and which could not reach him until the railroad should be repaired. Nor did he remove his sick and wounded to the James River, but left them where, in the final "change of base," they fell into the hands of the enemy. Then came mysterious movements of the rebels in large force. Did McClellan consolidate his army, as if expecting to make or meet an attack? No! still the immense area from wing to wing widens, and again, as we are informed, he telegraphed that his forces were ample—thanking the President, &c., and promising to be in Richmond within two days, though he made no movement, and though, as he now tells us, his army had been diminished, by death, sickness, and furloughs, to one-half its complement at Yorktown, and was largely exceeded by that of the enemy. At last—though Napoleon never allowed himself to be attacked, and though it is a familiar experience of the soldier that raw troops making an attack are equal to veterans receiving it—the blow was struck, not by McClellan, who never attacks, but by the rebels. Upon the disastrous seven days, which ended by stranding the grand army of the Potomac on the James River, there to be saved from annihilation by our gunboats, we have no official reports, but a few general facts are plain, from the undisputed testimony of the entire correspondence of those officers and men who bravely stood, uncheered by the personal presence of their Commander-in-Chief, where whizzing shot and screaming shell baptized them in the fires of battle:

*First.* The strategic story that McClellan contemplated a change in his base of operations is proven to be simply false, inasmuch as he had neither shown by his acts, nor communicated to his officers any such intended change until Jackson, pressing close upon McClellan's right wing, when the same was withdrawn by the latter, had placed himself between McClellan and his former base of operations, so that no other line of retreat was open, except to the James River. It certainly is not a strategic change of base, but a RETREAT, for a general to remove his army as far away from the enemy as possible, by the only route which they have left possible.

*Secondly.* That during the first, second and third days' battles, which ended in this retreat, the entire conflict was sustained by one or two divisions, after the model of Bull Run, Ball's Bluff and Williamsburgh, while the rest were idle, and that McClellan, therefore, either thought it unnecessary to bring his whole army into action, or else lacked the generalship to do it. By this we do not mean to imply that, after the retreat had fairly begun, the whole of our army might not have been attacked and engaged, but this was the strategy of the rebels, not of McClellan.

*Thirdly.* That, while in each of the fights but a small portion of our force was engaged, so far as we know, in each of them the entire available force of the rebels was in action.

*Fourthly.* That, since the commander could only judge of the numbers of the enemy by the vigor of their fighting, McClellan had no means of knowing that, had he on the first two days of the battle brought his entire force into action, he would not have outnumbered the rebels; in short, the country has no evidence that McClellan was outnumbered, and that the stories that he was outnumbered rest on the same foundation as the similar fictions relative to our forces at Bull Run and Ball's Bluff, which we now know to have been untrue. The absence of evidence that he was outnumbered becomes necessarily the evidence that he was outgeneraled, and this, too, not by any unequaled or remarkable generalship on the part of the rebels, but by a mere average common sense generalship, to which that of the more experienced commanders of McClellan's *corps d'armee* would have risen superior, had their counsels prevailed.

*Fifthly.* That, notwithstanding the particular forces engaged on our part were outnumbered, they were in no single instance beaten or driven, and that every time they retreated it was in consequence, not of the strength of the enemy, but of the orders of McClellan, and that in each case, when ordered to retreat, the division generals, who really conducted all the fighting, expressed themselves able and anxious to hold their ground, thus presenting the military anomaly of a series of battles, in each of which we were successful, but in the aggregate of which we were defeated.

We state the above conclusions as being facts established in the minds of the entire North. We state as further conclusions, which we believe will yet be demonstrated equally to the satisfaction of the world, that every retreat that McClellan ordered was unmilitary and unjustifiable; that every time he said retreat he ought to have said advance; that after the divisions composing his right wing had, under the able, heroic and experienced Fitz John Porter, not only held their ground unflinchingly in the absence of the re-enforcements which he had demanded, which were at hand, but which McClellan failed to send him, but had actually thrice repulsed the enemy, and finally driven him one mile within the line of his camps, the order of McClellan coming then to these victorious divisions, requiring them to do what the enemy had in vain for twelve hours striven to compel them to do, viz., to fall back to the rear of his left, and thus initiate a general retreat, was in itself equivalent to a rebel victory; that no division of McClellan's army had been whipped by fighting at the time he compelled them all to retreat, and that the army which retreats under such circumstances is defeated, not by the enemy, but by its general; that the desertion of his intrenchments before Richmond was a defeat; that the abandonment of the immense military stores at White House, without destroying them, constituted a disaster; the retreat over the bridges of the Chickahominy river, without destroying them, was a blunder, and the abandonment of all his sick and wounded to the enemy constitute when taken in con-

nection with the foregoing facts, a deep culmination of disgrace to the Union arms, which indeed has mystified and confounded the North, shaken for the time our confidence in our Government and in our military leaders, but which, for that very reason, should be searchingly investigated and fully understood, that the remedy may be promptly applied. Nothing is so simple as to apply the remedy, where the difficulty is known; nothing so impossible as to do right where the facts are concealed. McClellan's admirers, to cap the climax of deceptive audacity, may state that the advantage gained by the change of position is worth far more than it cost; but the country is wholly unable to understand the strategy by which an overwhelming invading army is so placed by its general that it is richly worth the loss of half the army to save the other half. Nay, if the country have not been altogether deceived, the salvation of the remaining half of the army is due to-day to the President and General Wool. The latter, for months, in vain besought McClellan for a few thousand troops with which to capture Norfolk and Portsmouth. The President, on his personal visit to Fortress Monroe, by one of those interferences with McClellan's plans, to which the country is indebted for the measure of safety which has attended the operations of the Eastern Department, placed the men at his disposal. Portsmouth and Norfolk were taken, the Merrimac destroyed, and the James River thus opened to our gunboats. Wool has since been removed from Fortress Monroe to Baltimore; but to his policy, in opposition to that of McClellan, the latter was indebted for his ability to retreat to the James River, there to be protected by our gunboats, instead of being assailed by the Merrimac. If such be strategy, what is incompetency? If this be victory, what, in the name of the God of Battles, is disaster? And who is General McClellan, that any portion of the people should have an interest in sending their brave sons to disaster and the grave under his leadership, rather than to victory under the banners of other generals? Who, that the country should, in that acme of faith to which religious devotees can hardly rise in their worship, still ceaselessly chant, "Though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee."

It is no answer to these facts, to ask why he is so popular with his army. His popularity with the army is very largely a past event, not a present fact. So long as its general lingered idly about Washington, they could see only one point in his character, viz., his manners, which are said to be easy, nonchalant, affable, *abandon* and *négligée*, especially towards the common soldier. He assumes no airs of greatness, as well he may, if he possesses none of its qualities, but puts himself on a level with his men. These qualities are excellent in a general, and sufficient to secure their affection, so long as he does nothing betraying the want of more important ones. Better were it for his fame, as a general, however, had he put himself upon a level with his men upon the battle-field, especially



during the bloody seven days, instead of having it written of him, even by his flattering parasites, that "he remained at his headquarters all day, looking glum as ——." Did McClellan appear on the bridges of the Chickahominy, like Napoleon at the bridge of Lodi? *Negligée* and *abandon* may be exceedingly charming qualities in a general in private life, and seemingly, but not necessarily, inconsistent with judgment, caution and prudence; but let them not upon the field develop into a nonchalant exposure of the lives of his men to no purpose—into a neglect of all the ordinary precautions in protecting his base, his stores, and his sick and wounded, and, finally, into an abandonment of them all to the enemy—while he, outstripping his army in a hard-fought retreat, watches with a spy-glass, from a secure position in the rigging of a gunboat, to see whether his army shall come up with him or be cut off in the swamps by the enemy, while the information which enables a large body of that army to avoid an intercepting force of the enemy, and directs them to their present location on the James River, comes, not from their general, but from a negro, whom his politico-military policy has forbidden to come within his lines.

There are many other facts which deserve to be carefully and candidly collated and fully brought out relative to this disastrous Peninsular campaign, which daily will loom up more and more disastrously as its facts become stripped of the gloss with which it is the interest of some to conceal them. We leave them without comment.

We have no epithets—we have only sorrow for the reverses of those to whom the country entrusts the power to serve her cause and promote her glory. Nor is it so much the fault as the misfortune of McClellan that he has failed to be what a portion of the people, without any word or act on his part to justify the expectation, insisted upon mistaking him for, viz., *an able man and a great general*. We only trust that the people will take to themselves their full share of the blame for the giddy elevation to which they have raised him, and that their ultimate construction of his conduct will be as charitable as that of those who have felt it to be a duty which they owed to the country, to speak with bold, sad kindness and truthful criticism of his career. We have briefly touched upon the salient points in the contrasting careers of these two widely different men. Condensing them all into their logical sum and conclusion, they prove, that while Fremont, owing to his identification with those political views which this Administration was elected to carry out, and in consequence of the adoption by him of a war policy, as to slavery, which the Administration and country have since adopted, and for no other reason, was removed, yet that his plans, both political and military, have all eventually been agreed to and put in practice; and though, doubtless, less perfectly than they would have been by their originator, have been crowned with invincible success. While, on the other hand, McClellan's political policy, in

reference to the rebels and their property, has been abandoned as impolitic, and his military plans, though he has had the unimpeded opportunity of carrying them out with the aid of unlimited means, have never commended themselves to the judgment of those who have been called to pass upon them, have resulted in such monstrous failures, and have so played away our immense resources against such comparatively small obstacles, and yet lost, that the reflection upon them inevitably involves the minds of very many in thoughts which cannot be uttered. For ourselves, if this rebellion could possibly be put down by conciliatory means, we believe General McClellan qualified to command our armies, if, indeed, any armies would be necessary. We believe that those who have adhered to him in a partisan spirit are those who believe that the rebellion is to be put down by some other mode than fighting. We have conversed with his soldiers, and we know that the basis of much of their former confidence in him was the belief that he would achieve great results without loss of life. All these theories are radically false. Instead of accomplishing great results with little loss of life, he has accomplished only defeat, at a tremendous sacrifice of life, and of every other element of success. We believe this rebellion will be put down by fighting, and kept down by a radical change in the feelings and aspirations of the ruling class of the South; that this change is not to be the result of individual conversions of those who constitute the ruling class, but is to be a change in the class that rules—by sending the class that now rules to the bottom of society, and by bringing the class now at the bottom to the top; by taking the sceptre from the one million of slaveholders, and giving it to the seven millions of “poor white trash” who now do their bidding—by so changing and remodeling the Constitution of Southern society as to make it democratic instead of aristocratic—republican instead of monarchical—united instead of disintegrated, liberal instead of despotic—free instead of slave—rich instead of poor—educated instead of ignorant—civilized instead of barbarous—happy instead of miserable.

As the aspirations and feelings of the present ruling class of the South are for slavery, because it helps them to everything dear and valuable in life, as our aspirations are for freedom, because it brings to us everything dear and valuable in life, so will the affections of this upturned common people of the South be for the freedom to which they will have been indebted for everything dear to them, and necessarily to that Union which binds them to free States, free press, free speech, and free schools. This war can have but one or the other of two results—*The South must be free, or her slaves must be free.* Slavery is the magazine of the rebellion. Send a single effective shot into it, and that which now supplies it with all its resources will explode and be the instrument of its destruction.

Slavery is our mortified limb, and its amputation is necessary. Let not the task be entrusted to one who believes that amputation is murder. His hand will tremble and his heart will fail him. Let it rather be entrusted to the representative man of those great radically Democratic ideas, of the superiority of those institutions in which all men are free, for which this war on our part is waging, and not to a devotee of the repudiated ideas of the sovereignty of the States, and the perpetuity of negro bondage, with all its inevitable tendencies, to establish despotism over white as well as black, for which this war, on the part of the South, is being waged, but which, by the very act of entering upon this war, the North has logically cast to the winds. Yes, let it be entrusted to that man to whom every constituent of the present Administration looks with a peculiar affection, which it is not given to any man in the nation to rival or destroy; who has in every trial been not merely true to the idea of Freedom, but a pioneer in its path; before whom (we quote from the language of a Southern Unionist) "the rebels have run faster and further, during this war, than before any other general;" who, at the battle of Cross Keys, at the head of 10,000 men, defeated Stonewall Jackson, the ablest general of the rebels, at the head of 28,000, and drove him out of the Shenandoah Valley, and who stands to-day not the first monument in history of the temporary ingratitude and incomprehension of Republics, but with a sweet compensation in the discriminating and criticising, but intelligent and affectionate regard of almost the whole people of that North which is to be henceforth the country. We do not suppose there is a man in the country who believes that Fremont, with 161,000 men, could have failed to capture Richmond, defended by 91,000. It is not eulogy, but history, to say that while Fremont has always acted with less means at his command than any other generals considered it possible for him to succeed with, he has always been successful, except in pleasing red-tapists and slow-coaches, and has often been brilliant in his military achievements, while McClellan, with greater means at his command than Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, or Wellington, has yet to win his first success; has lost more men and means in his disasters than they in their victories, and, to conclude our comparison, has sacrificed twice as many men as Fremont has ever commanded. Presidents and administrations may pass away; but the principle of Freedom, with which the name of Fremont is associated, will endure forever. He that has been crucified with it shall reign with it.

Some have embarked into this war, and many have remained at home to thwart and oppose it, under the fixed determination that, whatever else shall come of it, it shall not free the slaves. The undoubtedly necessary, but tyrannical edicts of such pro-slavery men as Halleck and Butler show that the alternative is to enslave the masters; and it becomes us to consider whether it is less practicable to free four millions of black slaves

than to reduce to political slavery eight millions of white freemen—for we have no evidence that, until Southern institutions are homogeneous with our own, the Southern people will, unless compelled by military coercion, remain in union with us, and permanent military coercion is political slavery. From this blind, illogical, and therefore temporary influence, the American people are soon to emerge, and when they do, and, as a corollary, the military events of this war shall be viewed with sound judgment instead of party prejudice, it will appear that, in deep vision and forecast of the future—in energetic and able adaptation of means to emergencies—in modesty in the hour of victory over traitors in the field, and fortitude under defeats inflicted by “patriots with rebel sympathies” at home—in skillful performance of every duty to which he has been called—and, above all, in that pioneer forecast which makes those who have succeeded but followers in his path, and those who have failed opposers of his plans—one name stands pre-eminent—it is that of John C. Fremont, and we believe that the people of the North will yet rise in their might and demand that Fremont, the most experienced and energetic officer in the service, and the senior in rank, be placed where he deserves to be, and where the interests of his country in this fearful crisis require that he should be—at the head of the American armies. Yet, though this, or aught like this, fail—though Fremont be still kept back—though he be required to do penance for his victories, while others are promoted for their disasters—yet, when the smoke and clouds of the combat shall have cleared away, his star shall shine forth as the morning star of regenerated American Freedom, and his fame shall be that of the pioneer in that reformed Republican policy which shall have given to the world a restored American Union.

“For Humanity sweeps onward—where, to-day, the martyr stands,  
On the morrow crouches Judas, with the silver in his hands ;  
Though to-day the stake is ready, and the lurid fagot burns,  
All the world, upon the morrow, for its loved apostle mourns ;  
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe returns,  
And gathers up the scattered ashes into History’s cold urns.”







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